

Fort Douglas, Utah, October 14, 1919

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

Mr. President:

A few months ago the King of Italy granted amnesty to 40,000 military prisoners. Among these were several thousand conscientious objectors and radicals who opposed the government during the war. But in America, approximately 10,000 citizens languish behind prison bars, due principally to some trivial infraction of military discipline, accident of birth, or fealty of conscience.

Permit me to suggest some reasons why it would be both wise and just for you to grant amnesty.

Nearly a year of my incarceration was spent in the "disciplinary barracks" at Fort Leavenworth. I write from personal knowledge of occurrences while I was there and concerning subsequent events from authentic information.

Nearly all of the soldier-prisoners are guilty of nothing but insignificant offences, such as absence without leave. Practically all who were absent without leave were convicted of desertion. As to the rest, a typical example is the case of a soldier who was sentenced to forty years for refusing to give an officer a package of cigarettes. Of course, there are a few cases of actual criminality, which is not surprising. If it is possible to manufacture criminals, Fort Leavenworth is one hundred percent efficient.

One of the greatest wrongs of the military system of "justice" is that an accused man cannot be admitted to bail pending his trial. This may be due to the time-honored custom of finding men guilty regardless of their innocence. A soldier is rarely acquitted.

In the guardhouse at Camp Funston, I discussed with the officer of the day the illegality of my detention and cited the manual for court-martial in substantiation of my contention. He replied, "The courts-martial manual is an instrument for official convenience only. When it will help us convict, we use it. But, when it interferes with our game, we ignore it. The prisoner cannot appeal to the manual if we refuse to recognize it."

At Fort Leavenworth, I spent fifteen weeks in the "hole" with twelve soldiers condemned to death, and I know what tortures they endured. The "hole" is a modern dungeon of sepulchral silence. It is in the basement of the seventh wing. On March 25, 1919, the Commandant, Colonel Rice, pointed out these men to Adjutant-General Harris, then visiting the prison, and told him in my hearing that carrying out of the death penalty awaited only your return from France and approval of the sentence.

Before I left Fort Leavenworth, I heard that fourteen of the witnesses against these men had confessed to having committed perjury.

The only man guilty of any offense in this group had done nothing worse, intentionally, than assault and battery. He was Donald Fisher. In the course of a fistfight with Shelby Hiele, he had knocked his antagonist down. In falling, Hiele's head struck the protruding lug of an iron bed. This caused his death. Fisher offered to plead guilty of murder and let himself be hanged if his fellow prisoners, all innocent of connection with the affair, should be released. But he was told by an officer, "We cannot accept your offer. We are going to hang seventeen men." That many were indicted and tried. Twelve were convicted and sentenced. I have not heard what has happened to them.

One of the men under sentence was William Scheiman, decorated by the State of Indiana for distinguished service. He was doing time in Leavenworth because he was brave enough to go to the bedside of his dying father, in spite of the refusal of his commanding officer to give him leave.

Harold Keyes was condemned because he not only refused to perjure himself as a witness for the prosecution, but also tried to induce other witnesses to be equally honest.

During the four and one half months I spent in the "hole," four prisoners hanged themselves, scores became insane, some of them became raving maniacs, and a large number of others died in the "hospital." Those who escaped disease and death became weak, emaciated, physical and mental wrecks.

Once I smuggled out a letter telling how the prisoners' mess fund was being robbed of \$700 a day. Colonel Rice threatened to have me court-martialed, but he never did. My statement was true, and to try me was not safe. You can imagine how poorly 3000 were fed. The total amount of food given each one daily cost but sixteen cents. At the same time, they were brutally overworked and mistreated. Underfed and overworked, the influenza killed seventy of them in one month. This was a death rate nineteen times greater than that of New York City during the same month.

The *New York Call* of August 26, 1919, gives the facts concerning the recent strike of prisoners at Fort Leavenworth. Starvation and mistreatment caused that strike. Even then, only a few actually struck, but the authorities refused to allow the others to work and thus forced them to appear as strikers until the recalcitrant ones gave in. When this finally happened, Lieutenant-Colonel Smith announced to the prisoners that all were to be prosecuted for mutiny, diet was to be restricted, paroles withdrawn, good time cancelled, the silence system enforced, the one day of leisure abolished, and all privileges stopped. Those who had not wished to strike were to be included in the punishment, Colonel Smith announced, "because they did not persuade the hotheaded ones to refrain from mutiny."

Even worse than the treatment of soldier prisoners is that accorded to alien enemies. The atrocities committed in their case seem incredible. I quote from the *Salt Lake Tribune* of August 24, 1918.

"Dave Gershon, a special agent for the Department of Justice, characterized as ridiculous the charges made by Karl Hentschel, a former inmate of the Fort Douglas prison camp and recently deported to Germany, describing frightful cruelties said to have been practiced in the compound here. In his interview, Hentschel stated it is quite fashionable in American prison camps to shoot down prisoners without cause. He said that, in 1918, a sentry whimsically fired five shots through the barbed wire, wounding a young man named Braun, now in Berlin, and shot the wooden leg off an old man. At other times, he said, they were fired on without cause. 'Charges of this character (said Gershon) are too ridiculous to merit serious denial because many people will believe them to be true. With the exception of confinement and having their mail censored, the prisoners were given every possible consideration. They received the same food and sleeping quarters as our own soldiers. I personally watched the manner in which the camp was conducted, and it could not have been improved.'"

I feel quite certain that, during the time that Mr. Gershon was watching, the conditions were ideal. That was perhaps two or three hours per month. I have seen the bullet wounds of those who were shot. Two men were crippled for life and others were seriously injured. Judging from the treatment that others and I received under Colonel Byram's reign, it would seem that the tales of Hentschel and others are true. Under the circumstances, it would accord with genuine Americanism to free these men. They have suffered more than enough for having been born in

the wrong country. You have already released the nationalistic aristocrats among the pro-German element. But the “workers” are still in jail. One of them says, “The authorities have lived up to all the demands of public opinion expressed in the daily papers. They shot eight of us. We were beaten with blackjacks, crushed, and manhandled. Twenty men have died and about twenty-five more have gone insane.”

The Department of Justice had to make a reputation. American citizens had to be embittered against Germany. These helpless prisoners became the instruments for the consummation of such designs. But the need of that has passed. Why keep them longer in jail?

There is the case of the Catholic priest, Father Berg. He is a zealous soul, loyal to America, who worked hard for the government during the war – a veritable crusader for liberty loan drives, war garden projects, etc. But someone reported that Father Berg was pro-German. That was enough for the Department of Justice. What a lucky chance! A spy! An enemy masquerading as a Catholic priest! Although armistice had been signed one month before, Father Berg was thrust into prison and kept in confinement without trial. When such treatment is meted out to one who represents a body of Christians generally accorded with respect, is it any wonder that mere “workers,” who agitate “a square deal for wage earners,” have their rights ignored?

Consider next the case of the conscientious objectors. They have taken precisely the same position that you took in several addresses. “The example of America must be a specific example of peace,” you said immediately after the sinking of the Lusitania. On February 2, 1916, at Kansas City, you said, “We can show our friendship for the world and our devotion for the principles of humanity better and more effectively by keeping out of this struggle than by getting into it.” On September 5, 1919, you said at St. Louis, “The seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry. This war was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war.” In these statements you have voiced the opinions and convictions of conscientious objectors. We have adhered unfalteringly to our belief. Commercial rivalry, “the seed of war in the modern world,” cannot be uprooted by war. On the contrary, the seed is by that means multiplied and sown on fertile ground. So history proves, and so time will show concerning the latest effort.

Conscientious objectors have political, humanitarian, and religious grounds for their principles.

Political objectors are serving in prison as George Washington and his followers would have served rather than kill fellow colonists at the behest of Great Britain. They refuse to kill fellow workingmen in a “commercial and industrial war.” However, they are quite willing, if necessary, to wage war against such real enemies of America as the profiteers. Their activities show their willingness to give their lives for the wage-slave’s freedom. You cannot crush the spirit of such men by imprisonment. You only strengthen their determination to fight for justice. You, of all men, should be with them and not against them.

“But,” it is said, “the objectors should have obeyed the will of the majority.” Political objectors are sticklers for majority rule, but the opinion of the majority was not ascertained nor asked. No popular vote was allowed on the question of our entrance into war. It is quite evident that a majority was opposed to the war, as otherwise you could have raised a volunteer army.

Would you participate in a war to establish Bolshevism in the United States or any other country? I believe you would be conscientiously opposed to doing so. And if you were imprisoned and tortured for adhering to your beliefs, you would feel that your constitutional rights, your moral rights, and your inalienable human rights had been ruthlessly trampled upon. Yet you have acted in such a manner in the handling of political objectors to war.

A “just war” – if there could be such a thing – would not require conscription. Volunteers would be plentiful.

Humanitarian objectors oppose the killing of their fellow men. They feel that organized murder is neither an expedient nor a practical solution for the suspicions, jealousies, and revenge that hurl men into mortal combat with each other. It is conceded that deadly weapons are the worst instruments that can be used in settling disputes between members of a family or between neighbors. When resorted to, the result is sure to prove that it would have been better, even for the victor, to have left them alone. The humanitarian objector reasons that it is the same with international disputes. He feels that the cause of humanity can best be advanced by loyalty to and ideal. He believes that the greatest good to the greatest number can be accomplished by enduring insult and persecution at the hands of those blind to the righteous course.

Religious objectors are such through their faith in God. They believe that the best way to preserve the nation’s honor is to avoid dishonoring God, and that the best way to conquer an enemy is to treat him as God prescribes. The religious objector helps his country more in one hour than a regiment of military men could in a hundred years, for God holds the destiny of nations in the palm of His hand. To serve Him is to ensure the country’s future.

I am an objector on religious, humanitarian, and political grounds. If I had no religious scruples, common sense humanitarianism would keep me from slaughtering my fellow men. If I had neither religious nor humanitarian motives, then I would refrain because of political motives.

I do not belong to a religious sect whose ministers oppose war, but I belong to one whose creed forbids its members from participation in war. Clergy and laity will dispute this declaration now, but someday they will admit that my attitude is correct and practical. I am a Catholic, or as some would have it, a Roman Catholic; not an apostate but what is known in the Church as a “practical Catholic.” I am a member of St. Catherine’s parish, Denver, Colorado, and was a member of the Knights of Columbus until expelled for publishing an article against war. Expulsion from the Knights of Columbus does not in any manner affect one’s communion with the Church.

My religious stand is based on God’s command, “Thou shalt not kill.” Some argue that “in olden times God commanded men to slay the enemy.” Well, God may command us to do one thing at one time and another thing at another time. That is His affair. But there has been no command from Him for thousands of years that permits deviation from the command, “Thou shalt not kill.” Christ reiterated this command on many occasions.

The Catholic, who tries to justify the taking of human life by quoting from the Old Testament, as do the compilers of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* in the case of capital punishment, might with equal force argue in favor of divorce. But though the Old Testament sanctions divorce, the Catholic Church properly insists that Christ’s prohibition takes precedence. Thus, consistent Catholics will not let Old Testament quotations lead them into the war game.

In Matthew 7:12, we are told, “All things that you would that men do unto you, do even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” Christ says, “This is the Law.” Do we want other nations to wage war against us? Suppose our statesmen err. Do we want other nations to charitably show us the error of our ways, or do we want them to annihilate us because our representatives – rather “misrepresentatives” – blundered? Christ tells us not to resist evil. Should we obey or ignore Him? If His policy is correct, then war is wrong. If “overcome evil with good” is not a practical method for handling national and individual ruptures, then Christ is wrong and the Temple of Christianity falls.

When the government orders me to do what is righteous, I will obey with pleasure. But when I am ordered to do what is iniquitous, it is my duty to disobey. If the state requires a

citizen to violate God's law, he must ignore the state. Loyalty to God is loyalty to your country. The trailblazers of Christianity flaunted themselves in the face of pagan emperors and openly paid homage to the living God. The religious conscientious objector, ignoring the commands of the modern pagans, refuses to yield to militarism's decrees.

A letter from a New York Chinaman, recently printed in the *New York World*, contains the following, which was reprinted in a subsequent issue of the *Denver Catholic Register*:

"If a Chinaman may be permitted to suggest, would it not be possible to found a better and more lasting peace upon the Ten Commandments than upon the Fourteen Points? ... Why does not the West now, after 1900 years, try the experiment of founding a state upon the teaching of its Christ? We Chinamen believe that trade restrictions beget war. The West has been at war for and because of its markets ever since this modern civilization was created.

"When the guns of Germany worked destruction to the cathedrals of France, we heard you weeping aloud in your marketplaces because of the architectural beauties of Rheims and Louvain. Not one voice was raised in honest protest because of the desecration of the Inner Tabernacle. I attack not your Christian religion, nor would I compare it unfavorably with our Confucianism. You, however, do not practice your religion. With you, a commercial relation comes first in all things; the moral relation is forgotten.

"Lasting peace will come only when you honestly accept the teachings of Christ, whom you now only pretend to worship."

In essence, the Chinaman suggests that "actions speak louder than words."

In the city of The Hague, Netherlands, in the year 1899, the Hague Peace Council was established in what is known as the Peace Palace, erected at a cost of millions of dollars, ten millions of which were donated by Andrew Carnegie.

A peace propaganda was inaugurated with a view to establishing world peace. That the great nations of the world were interested in the movement is evidenced by the part they played in the peace undertakings in general and in the donations to the Peace Palace. The grand stained glass windows in the Court of Justice came from England; the massive gates at the park entrance from Germany; the gorgeous marbles of the interior from Italy; the silk tapestries in the Council Chamber from Japan; the priceless porcelain vases from China; a marble throne from Greece; Gobelin tapestries from France; a vase of jasper from Russia; marble statuary from the United States; costly carpets from Turkey; with minor gifts from all the minor nations of the world.

Within a few short years, five of the monarchs and presidents whose pictures adorn the pompous walls of the Peace Palace were laid under six feet of earth in conformity with the cold, shrill dictum of an assassin's bullet. "Their house was built upon sand."

The great rulers of the world sit upon an International Tribunal of Arbitration at The Hague. A magnificent marble hall was built for the delegates to deliberate in. A library on international peace consisting of 75,000 volumes with all known cases of codified arbitration was placed at the disposal of those charged with the duty of settling disputes between nations. And an international committee of eminent statesmen was formed, supplemented by a body of permanent jurists, who convene at The Hague for purposes of international arbitration.

With an organization of such magnitude, devoted solely to the maintenance of peace, one would think that wars were at an end. But within fifteen years after the investiture of the Peace Guardians, a hurricane of war stormed over the tranquil universe, five of the eight greatest powers of the world flew at each other's throats, and their activities were soon supplemented by other nations great and small. Hundreds of millions of human beings – mostly Christians – were involved in murderous conflict upon land, in the air, and on and under the water. Within a short time, the greatest war in history reached its zenith.

Had unalloyed Christianity permeated the proceedings of The Hague, they could have profitably dispensed with the 75,000 volumes on international peace, substituting therefore the simple truthful word of God found in the New Testament. By insistently cleaving to the rules that Christ laid down, just as the builder executes the architect's designs, peace would crown their efforts. It is criminal folly to labor for peace in any other manner.

Mr. President, Christ's simple entreaty, "Overcome evil with good," is infinitely more dynamic for giving mobility to the machinery of peace than the 75,000 volumes in the gilded library of The Hague. Stained glass windows of faith; massive gates of hope; gorgeous marbles of charity; tapestries of love; porcelain vases made from materials of pure friendship and sincerity; a marble throne of forbearance and forgiveness; a vase of kindliness and brotherhood; marble statuary of adamant good-will; priceless carpets of tree trade upon which nations will move in a harmony destructive of the "commercial rivalries" that you spoke of in your Kansas City speech; and the myriad reverential relationships that will evolve from practicing the virtues enumerated – these will construct a Peace Palace sublimely more beautiful in God's sight than that of the mundane Hague. And, its potency in establishing world peace will transcend mere man's noblest and mightiest efforts.

Such is the kind of a temple that, with God's grace, the conscientious objector is diligently laboring to erect. Adhering to the plan of the Divine Architect, he has proven the sincerity of his undertaking by choosing torture and humiliation in place of the ease and renown that a comfortable berth in the non-combative compartment of the army's Pullman would have afforded him.

The "Christ of the Andes" is a large monument standing 14,500 feet above sea level on the Argentine-Chilean frontier, erected to commemorate a peace treaty between the two countries and dedicated May 13, 1904. Above the base of the monument is a granite sphere weighing fourteen tons, resting on a granite column, and on the sphere is outlined a map of the world.

The figure of Christ is of bronze, twenty-six feet in height, while a cross in His left hand is five feet higher. His right hand is outstretched in blessing. On a tablet at the base is the following inscription:

"Sooner shall these mountains crumble into dust than Argentines and Chileans break the peace to which they have pledged themselves at the foot of Christ, the Redeemer." Such should be the attitude and determination of all nations.

The conscientious objectors are sculpting a living monument, one that will beautify mountain and plain, one that will make the human temple a sublime embodiment of Christ's precepts instead of Satan's vehicle.

While St. Paul was a prisoner in Rome, twenty-nine years after our Lord's ascension, he wrote his memorable epistle to the Ephesians. In the sixth chapter he wrote:

"Finally, brethren, be strengthened in the Lord, and in the might of His power. Put you on the armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, and against the spirits of wickedness in the high place. Therefore, take unto you the armor of God, so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, having on the breastplate of justice and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of Peace, in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:10-17)

The battering ram of faith will bring to naught life's most insuperable obstacles. Why should Christians doubt? The power of God is invincible. With it we have all; without it we have nothing. Why compromise with the world? "He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathers not with Me scatters." (Matthew 12:30) Christ does not permit a middle of the road policy. If you are not with Him in applying His remedy, "Overcome evil with good," then, according to His testimony, you are against Him. To be against Christ is to be against yourself and against humanity.

The spirit of good and the spirit of evil have access to every man's heart. When either obtains consent to enter, it then controls to the extent that we assent.

Militarism is a manifestation of the evil spirit. At least the Allies claimed as much for German militarism. In other words, the devil was functioning through the Kaiser and it became our job to put him out of business.

Militarists had one way of consummating the task; the conscientious objector had another way. The conscientious objector advocated fighting the spirit of the devil in the Kaiser with the spirit of God in ourselves, and according to the word of God, those who use His weapons will vanquish the evil one.

By fighting the spirit of the devil in the Kaiser with the spirit of the devil in ourselves, we simply extended Satan's domain. Had we used the good Spirit within us and the means which that Spirit restricted us to, world conditions would be better today.

For fear that the conscientious objectors would buckle on their armor and sally forth to victory, Satan's emissaries put them where their ideas would not contaminate the public. Ever since their imprisonment, the conscientious objectors have been transferred from place to place because of the corrupting influence of their lives upon the morale of the army. A good many have been transferred more frequently than I, but this is the eleventh penal institution in which I have taken up my abode in consequence of my refusal to kill, and my eviction from the various premises was not because I would not pay my rent. Some of the changes were due to ordinary routine, but some of them, particularly the last one, were for the avowed purpose of getting us out of the way.

Mr. President, your decision to free or to keep conscientious objectors in prison will determine whether you are a Christian or not. And the decision is fraught with eternal consequences. "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his own soul?" Pander to the insatiable lust of militarism, and you hurl defiance into the loving face of Jesus Christ, your God and your Savior.

In your speech at the funeral of the American sailors who fell at Vera Cruz, you said, "I never was under fire, but I fancy there are some things just as hard to do as to go under fire. I fancy it is just as hard to do your duty when men are sneering at you as when they are shooting at you... The cheers of the moment are not what a man ought to think about, but the verdict of his conscience."

We conscientious objectors thought of the verdict of conscience and followed it. The result was that we were not only sneered at, but we were also imprisoned and tortured. And a too large percentage of our group was actually murdered in the process of wreaking vengeance upon us for having accepted "the verdict of conscience."

We have been called cowards who make a subterfuge of "conscience." You are aware of facts that show the contrary. You know that we were offered safe bombproof positions in noncombatant branches of the army. On our refusal of these we were offered farm furloughs. We declined because acceptance would have made us nonetheless participants in the killing game. Personal safety was no attraction.

The court-martial record of Erling H. Lunde's defense at his trial at Camp Funston on October 15, 1918, presents concrete evidence of what I say. He had been offered many safe jobs that would have kept him out of the war zone. Furthermore, he was eligible for the Engineers Reserve Corps, which would have exempted him from immediate service and left him in college until June 1919. Besides, his wife's uncle, Sir Sam Hughes of Canada, would have secured him a safe place in the Canadian army. But he chose to see it through on principle. In prison, Lunde refused to perform prison labor, to stand at attention in the presence of officers, or to encourage or support the military machine in any way. As a result, he suffered intense physical and mental pain for long continued periods. He could easily have avoided this by hoisting the white flag.

He day before his sentence expired, he was given to understand that, unless he would say "I am willing to work," he would be kept imprisoned serving his good time and during that time might be court-martialed and given additional sentence. But although his relatives eagerly awaited his homecoming, although his devoted wife was looking forward to greet him, although a baby had been born while he served his country behind bars, with characteristic manliness Lunde went back to his prison, steeped in sorrow and despair but comforted by the knowledge of a noble and patriotic sacrifice for principle. Is Lunde a coward? If so, it is such cowardice as his that has given the world whatever treasured heritage it possesses. And Lunde is but one of a long list of other objectors serving "good time" in prison when they should be at home, all because the military authorities failed to break their spirits. These men had excellent opportunities to show themselves cowards. Today they are paying the price for genuine valor. One of them, Howard Moore, was awarded a Carnegie Medal for heroism at the very time that he was manacled to the bars for refusing to aid militarism.

My own specific offense was refusal to fill out and sign the questionnaire. For this, I was sentenced to nine months in the Denver County jail. The judgment of the court was in conflict with constitutional rights. I appealed and was released on \$2500 bond. While out on bail, the military authorities arrested me and gave me an additional sentence of twenty-five years for "desertion from the army and propaganda." I was never in the army. Nevertheless, I was found guilty of deserting it, notwithstanding a ruling of the Judge Advocate General's Department at Washington on July 11, 1918, thirteen days before my trial. The ruling substantially denied the right of a military organization to try me.

I could have obtained a fourth class classification by answering the questionnaire, for I had dependents: a wife and widowed mother. Such classification was tantamount to exemption.

I was sentenced on August 10, 1918, to twenty-five years at hard labor in Leavenworth. Execution of the sentence was delayed from day to day. Finally, on September 5, I was offered remission of the entire sentence and a first class sergeantcy in noncombatant service as a clerk in the 19th Train Headquarters. My wife was in the hospital and begged me to accept the offer. Baby Charles was born the following day. I wanted to please my wife. Moreover, she and the baby and my widowed mother were dependent on me for support. I assure you, Mr. President, it was not cowardice that caused me to choose twenty-five years in prison in preference to the safe and easy course.

Even before this, on July 4, 1918, other objectors and I were offered farm furloughs. Then, on April 21, 1919, after three months in the dungeon, I was tentatively offered a release if I would go to work for three months. Had cowardice been my motive, would I have accepted twenty-five years in the "hole" in preference to three months' pleasant work, to be followed by release?

If the conscientious objectors had gone to war, it would have been a case of doing wrong on account of fear of fighting for the right. I know of many such instances among soldiers who

were hailed as heroes. How many there were in the entire army who went on this account, I do not know. But I do know about the cases where open-hearted confessions were made to me by men in uniform ready to go across.

In our military prisons, ruined health is a certainty and death is highly probable. Disease and emaciation registered a one hundred percent toll among conscientious objectors. Many lost their minds. The percentage of deaths was greater than in the army. The army was the safest place for the man "afraid to fight."

The conscientious objector is vindicated. The "war to end war" has been won. Yet you declare that there will be more wars unless the Versailles plan of a League of Nations shall be adopted. And your opponents declare that there will be more wars if it should be adopted. You are both right. We were told the war would crush militarism. We find the world super-militarized. In place of disarmament, nations are armed to the teeth and expending larger sums than ever for preparedness. There is but one solution to the war problem: an uncompromising refusal to kill and a willingness to suffer anything, even death, rather than kill God's children. The conscientious objectors have led the way. Time will tell how many have the wisdom and courage to follow.

In conclusion, I will tell you how, even in prison, the constitutional guarantee of freedom of conscience is trampled upon. A London publication, *Common Sense*, tell in its issue of July 19 of treatment accorded a prisoner at Fort Riley, Kansas. It describes acts of a nature we are accustomed to believe are inflicted on helpless prisoners by none but aboriginal savages. The August 14 issue of *Much Ado* tells of the mistreatment at Camp Funston of Julius Greenbaum and other prisoners by Major Tausig, Captain Buckley, and Colonel Barnes with the admitted knowledge and sanction of General Wood. For refusal to obey a military command, Howard Moore, a conscientious objector, was brutally beaten at Fort Douglas in August 1919. The man who beat him was Sergeant Brundt acting in obedience to orders. Two guards and another sergeant stood by to help, if needed. Moore is a nonresistant. Who was braver, the sergeant who dared not refuse obedience to a brutal command to beat a helpless unresisting man half his size, or the prisoner who remained true to conscience? Lieutenant-Colonel Graham approved the beating, as also did Captain Emery, the surgeon who dressed Moore's wounds. The affair has since been whitewashed through a Star Chamber investigation.

The *Battle Bulletin* of September 2 tells how Colonel Byram, commandant at Fort Douglas, ordered 100 conscientious objectors to do military work, knowing well that they must refuse and had proven their sincerity during the year of suffering and torture. Their protests were disregarded. They were put in a compound on bread and water. Had they been murderers, they would have received better treatment. They were held thus even after their sentences had expired.

So long as I have been held at Fort Douglas, no one has been allowed to visit me. For more than nine weeks, my brother has tried in vain to call on me. My mother wanted to see me. I had to write to her, "Stay at home. The tyrant Byram has prohibited visitors." For eight weeks I have tried to get permission to telephone my brother. He lives in Salt Lake City, three miles distant. Colonel Byram informed me on September 11, "You have a standing refusal. You cannot telephone your brother." Mother worries, wondering why I cannot even telephone. But Colonel Byram only smiles. If I were a murderer, anyone could visit me. But for refusal to murder, even relatives are barred.

My present situation is similar to when I was in solitary confinement at Fort Leavenworth. My brother Joseph came 3000 miles to visit me, but was not permitted to do so. As I stood in that dark hole, I thanked God for religion, for nothing else restrained me from seeking an

opportunity to murder Colonel Rice. Joe went to Chicago and wrote to Colonel Rice, again asking permission to visit me. I was told that unless I went to work, permission would be denied. Joe came anyway and after several unsuccessful attempts was finally allowed to see me for ten minutes on Christmas Eve. The strain of that long and needless prohibition weakened him. He contracted a cold in the severe storm that raged as he came to prison for the last time. He died ten days later. Through his intercession may God be merciful to those who have so wickedly and so unnecessarily persecuted the men whose only crime was a steadfast refusal to commit wholesale murder.

When Frank Burke, one of our conscientious objectors, became sick a few months ago, he was told at the hospital, "If you were not a C.O. you would get decent treatment." Two days later he paid the supreme penalty for godliness. He died in terrible agony.

There are many cases I would like to cite, but I have written enough to show how freedom of conscience is being ignored, and to prove that conscientious objectors are not cowards.

Whatever strong criticism is contained in this letter is directed, not against individuals, but against the system. I have met many brutes, and none worse than Colonel Byram and Colonel Rice. That, however, is but their military nature. That is the spirit of militarism eclipsing what would otherwise be kindly, generous, and loving natures. So it is with most if not all of those gripped in the debasing clutches of a satanic institution. These men have, not my contempt, but my heartfelt commiseration.

There is yet a little time in which they may be saved, but soon it will be eternally too late. May God enlighten them and give them strength to turn upon and tread the righteous course. "He who hesitates is lost."

Mr. President, if you have the tiniest flame of chivalry and justice within your breast, you will consider the godliness of the move and declare a general amnesty.

With every good wish for your success and happiness, I am:

Sincerely yours,

BEN SALMON

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Minor changes have been made to punctuation and sentence structure to improve readability.

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